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Independent presidential candidate John B. Anderson said yesterday that as president he might apologize to Iran for possible U.S. collaboration with the Iranian secret police, but only after the 53 American hostages are released.

Seeking to clarify his earlier statements, Rep. Anderson (R-Ill.) called a news conference in Portland, Ore., to elaborate on his position on whether the United States should apologize for its role in the government of the deposed shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Anderson had said Wednesday that if there is documented evidence of U.S. intelligence agency collaboration with Iranian secret police who tortured or killed political foes of the shah, he would, as president, issue an apology. He also said he would release any CIA documents showing such collaboration.

Yesterday, however, Anderson said he did not believe evidence of collaboration exists. He also said there can be no discussion of an apology, an investigation of the U.S. role in pre-revolutionary Iran or an investigation into possible collaboration between the CIA and SAVAK, the Iranian secret police, "until the hostages are released."